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SPEECH

OF

HON. WILLIAM T. AVERY,
OF TENNESSEE,

IN REPLY TO

HON. EMERSON ETHERIDGE.



DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 31, 1861.

The House having under consideration the report from the select committee of thirty-three—Mr. AVERY said:

MR. SPEAKER: I had not intended to say one word during the whole course of this debate, conscious, as I was, that the period for profitable discussion and argument on the part of the Representatives of the people of the South had passed, and the time for action had come; nor would I have violated that determination, did I not deem it a duty that I owe to myself, to my constituency, and to my State, to vindicate them from the false opinions that this House and the country might entertain concerning their position in the present crisis of the Union, judging from some of the speeches which have been made upon this floor by those who claim to represent the sentiments of that people and that State. I wish to set my State right in this perilous controversy; and in doing so, to reply to the extraordinary, and, I may say, unnatural speech made the other day by my colleague from the ninth congressional district of Tennessee, (Mr. ETHERIDGE.) An official report of that speech having not yet appeared in the Globe, the official organ of this House, I am indebted to my colleague, to whom I applied this morning, for a copy in pamphlet form, at the same time stating to him that I expected to reply to it this evening, and desired his presence. I regret very much not to see him in his seat. The New York Tribune, of the 24th of January—the morning after my colleague's speech—contains the following complimentary notice of it:

"The able and patriotic speech of Mr. ETHERIDGE, of Tennessee, in the United States House of Representatives yesterday, was worthy of his high reputation, and cannot fail to command the general attention of the country. He presents a firm and inflexible front to treason in any shape, and is for the Union, first and last, and at all hazards."

I will also read from the Cincinnati Gazette, another Republican organ, a still more eulogistic notice:

"HON. EMERSON ETHERIDGE, of Tennessee, made a speech in the House of Representatives yesterday, which, for boldness, for power, for patriotism, and for eloquence, has not been excelled. The position of this man of the South is in striking contrast with that of the driveling demagogues who pretended to represent the Democracy of Ohio in convention at Columbus yesterday. We rejoice that it is in our power to send out in the same paper a report of the speech of Mr. ETHERIDGE and the proceedings of the Democratic convention. The people will strike the difference and make up the verdict. From this time the name of Hon. EMERSON ETHERIDGE, of Tennessee, will be warmly and favorably canvassed in connection with Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet."

I have said, Mr. Speaker, the extraordinary and unnatural speech of my colleague; and I think that I am warranted in thus designating a speech made by a Representative of a southern constituency upon this floor, which is thus lauded and applauded by the chief organs of the Republican party. The gentleman began by

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saying that if he had a jury of good and lawful men, duly impaneled, sworn, and charged to try the issue joined between the North and the South, he would, before that impartial tribunal, submit this case without argument, confident in the assurance that he would receive a speedy and righteous verdict.

My colleague may have fancied that he was engaged in his old vocation, defending before a jury the offenders of the law—pleading the cause of criminals at the bar of public justice. The extract from the Cincinnati Gazette, which I have just read, might suggest to a more uncharitable mind than mine that a contingent fee, in the shape of high place in the Cabinet councils of Mr. Lincoln, sharpened the intellect and quickened the powers of his defence. But I will not be thus uncharitable. I will say, however, that, in my judgment, a Representative of a southern constituency, born and nurtured upon southern soil, in a crisis like this, is far forgetful of his State, her rights, her interests, and her honor, when he unblushingly stands forth, cheered on by them, to champion the cause of the sworn enemies of his section.

The leading idea in my colleague's speech is, that the North has been guilty of no wrong to justify the "extraordinary, unpardonable, and indefensible" action on the part of the people of the South; that the southern mind is maddened and insane. And yet, he wants to adjourn this question over to this mad and insane populace. Who, but the people, in their sovereign capacity, have moved this mighty revolution, even to the dismemberment of the Confederacy? Is it possible that these States, having more than double the population of the original thirteen, are all madly driven to desperation for nothing? Sir, I ask again, is it possible that the whole body of the South, the people of fifteen sovereign States, are madly bent, as my colleague says, "on believing a lie that they may be damned?" What thought Mr. Fillmore about this thing—my colleague's "model President?" In replying to a large New York meeting, informing him that he had been appointed to proceed as ambassador to intercede with the South, he declined going, saying:

"What they want, (the southern people,) and what I want, is some assurance from the Republican party, now dominant at the North, that they, or at least the conservative portion of them, are ready and willing to come forward and repeal all unconstitutional slave laws, live up to the compromises of the Constitution, execute the laws of Congress honestly and faithfully, and treat our southern brethren as friends. When I can have any such reliable assurance as this to give, I will go most cheerfully and urge our southern brethren to follow our example, and restore harmony and fraternal affection between the North and the South.

"At present, our labors should be here. Let us put ourselves right, and then we can, with more confidence and justice, appeal to them."

Why, sir, even my colleague from the first district (Mr. NELSON) enumerates a catalogue of causes of fear which we justly have from the Republican party; "the greatest of which," to use his own language, "is in the fact that prominent members of the Republican party have announced the doctrine upon the floor of the House of Representatives that the Supreme Court, as now constituted, is a partisan tribunal, and are doing all they can to sap the public confidence in the greatest judicial tribunal upon earth."

Sir, every single resolution which has been passed by the most conservative people of the South, in their primary assemblies, large and small, in their legislative bodies everywhere, proclaim that there have been aggressions; that there have been wrongs; and that those wrongs and aggressions must be righted, and that speedily, or they will declare themselves absolved from all allegiance to this Government. Is it to be expected that those to whom conservative men all over the land are appealing to come to the rescue of the country; they alone who have perpetrated the wrong; they who alone can remedy it—is it to be expected that they will come forward and remedy those wrongs, when a Representative of southern constituents tells them there have been none? I say, that every solitary resolution passed by the people of the South—I mean the Union people; I mean the most conservative people; I do not mean the disunionists or fire-eaters; but those who are considered of the most compromising school of southern rights—has declared that there are wrongs, and that those wrongs must be redressed. That, sir, is the sentiment of Tennessee.

I have here the resolutions recently passed by the Legislature of Tennessee by an unprecedented majority; passed with only six dissenting votes in the House, and I believe five in the Senate. That body of one hundred members came fresh from their constituency. Let us see what the potential voice of Tennessee speaks in regard to the wrongs of the people of Tennessee; and what they say must be put into the amended Constitution, or they, too, will fasten upon themselves this "unpardonable" sin of disunion. Here it is:

"A declaratory amendment that African slaves, as held under the institutions of the slaveholding States, shall be recognized as property, and entitled to the *status* of other property in the States where slavery exists; in all places within the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress within the slave States; in all the Territories south of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes; in the District of Columbia; in transit and whilst temporarily sojourning with the owner in the non-slaveholding States and Territories north of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes; and when fugitives from the owner in the several places above named, as well as in all places in the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress in the non-slaveholding States.

"That in all the territory now owned, or which may be hereafter acquired by the United States south of the parallel of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes, African slavery shall be recognized as existing, and be protected by all departments of the Federal and territorial governments; and in all north of that line, now owned or to be acquired, it shall not be recognized as existing; and whenever States formed out of any of said territory south of said line, having a population equal to that of a congressional district, shall apply for admission into the Union, the same shall be admitted as slave States; while States north of the line formed out of said territory, and having a population equal to a congressional district, shall be admitted without slavery; but the States formed out of said territory, north and south, having been admitted as members of the Union, shall have all the powers over the institution of slavery possessed by the other States of the Union.

"That slave property shall be rendered secure in transit through, or while temporarily sojourning in non-slaveholding States or Territories, or in the District of Columbia.

"An amendment to the effect that all fugitives are to be deemed those offending the laws within the jurisdiction of the State, and who escape therefrom to other States; and that it is the duty of each State to suppress armed invasions of another State."

These are the chief points contained in the resolutions of the Legislature of Tennessee, which they present as the ultimatum of that State. Do not these resolutions point to wrongs? and that these wrongs must be righted, and that speedily? They declare that the right of property in slaves must be recognized; that the right of transit into free States and Territories shall be admitted and protected; that the right of temporary residence and holding slaves in such States and Territories shall also be recognized by the Constitution, and protected; and that in all the territory of the United States south of 36° 30', now held and hereafter to be acquired, slavery shall be acknowledged and protected by all departments of the Government.

But what do they go on further and say?

"5. *Resolved*, That should a plan of adjustment satisfactory to the South not be acceded to by the requisite number of States to perfect amendments to the Constitution of the United States, it is the opinion of this General Assembly that the slaveholding States should adopt for themselves the Constitution of the United States, with such amendments as may be satisfactory to the slaveholding States; and that they should invite into a Union with them all States of the North which are willing to abide such amended Constitution and frame of Government; severing at once all connections with States refusing such reasonable guarantees to our future safety; such renewed conditions of Federal Union being first submitted for ratification to conventions of all the States respectively."

Not that this plan of adjustment must be satisfactory to one community; not to one State or any number of southern States; not alone to the Union men, but to the whole and entire South; and unless these "just and reasonable guarantees" are given, they are for disunion, and for forming a Union with no people or State that will not give them.

But what says the Nashville Banner, the home organ of Mr. Bell, and the leading paper of my colleague's party—if he has a party—in the State? This paper, in its issue of the 25th January, uses this significant language:

"The resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, published in our paper a few days since, define the position of Tennessee satisfactorily, as we believe, to the great mass of the people. They substantially adopt the Crittenden compromise as a basis of adjustment of the pending issues between the North and South; and Tennessee will say to the people of the North, not in a spirit of blustering defiance and braggadocio, but firmly and calmly, and with a sincere and honest desire that this adjustment may be accepted—we demand nothing more—we will accept of nothing less."

Here, sir, is what this newspaper, representing the most conservative element in Tennessee, says is the uncompromising position of that State with regard to these resolutions, that "she demands nothing more, and will accept nothing less."

My colleague says he is for adjourning this question over from this House to the people. Who, let me ask, have refused every such proposition? It is humiliating to southern men to have to say that every effort that has been made for the adjustment of these difficulties has come from southern members. How have they been treated? Why, sir, every proposition that has been made by the most conservative men in the House and Senate, by which this question is to be turned over from Congress to the people, has been trampled under foot, and indignantly spurned, by those to whose defence my colleague has come. There was a proposal made the other day—the most direct one I have heard of—to adjourn this question over to the people; that every Representative upon this floor, of all parties, should resign his seat, to take effect on the 21st of February; that a new election should be ordered, to allow the people to speak between now and the 4th of March next. In twenty days public sentiment might have been expressed upon these questions; and

then, when the new Congress came in, we would walk out. I never heard of my colleague seizing upon this mode of adjourning this question over to the people.

But is it the manly part of southern Representatives to stand here in their places, and plead upon their bended knees as suppliants at the footstool of the Republican power, day by day? I, for one, am tired of making these appeals, when the chief rulers of the party, President, premier, press, and all, are daily and hourly thundering in our ears that they have no compromises to make.

Mr. KILGORE. Will the gentleman permit me to ask him a question? The gentleman has given us the ultimatum of Tennessee, and has complained continually of the wrongs of the Republican party and of the people of the North. I would ask the gentleman to specify those particular wrongs, so that we may reply to the charge.

Mr. AVERY. For forty years, sir, we have been specifying these charges, until, finding that specifying does no good, we have become tired of it. I will, however, satisfy the gentleman with some slight specifications presently.

My colleague goes on to enumerate what he calls the items in the bill of indictment against the Republican party, and proceeds, *seriatim*, to defend them from what he denominates false charges. He first alludes to the personal liberty bills, and assumes to speak, *ex cathedra*, for the Republican party, in saying that these bills will all be repealed. He asserts that these bills only exist in such far off States as Vermont, not accessible to fugitive slaves. If my memory serves me right, they have been passed in every single Republican State where there has not been either a Democratic Legislature or a Democratic Governor to veto their passage. In this very State of Vermont, their recent Legislature rejected by an overwhelming majority a proposition to repeal these laws. But supposing there has been manifested a disposition, as in the State of Rhode Island, to repeal them. Has it not been brought about, alone, by the firm, unshaken and determined action upon the part of these southern States, "the kingdom of South Carolina," as the gentleman sneeringly calls her, at the head?

Mr. KILGORE. I ask the gentleman whether there has been a personal liberty bill passed in a single State since the existence of the Republican party?

Mr. AVERY. I do not know when you date the birth of the Republican party.

Mr. KILGORE. It commenced in 1854-'55.

Mr. AVERY. There have been, I presume; but it matters not when they were passed.

Mr. KILGORE. Well, name the States.

Mr. AVERY. I will do that directly. I say that where these bills have not been passed, it has been where there was a Democratic Legislature, or a Democratic Governor to veto them. My colleague says that none were passed in the north-western States. If that is so, it was for the reason I have stated. He says there is no personal liberty bill in the State of Ohio. I recollect that a Senator from Ohio (Mr. WADE) said, at the last session of Congress, on the floor of the American Senate, that the personal liberty bill had been stricken from the statute-book of Ohio it was true; but that whenever the Republican party came into power they would be re-enstamped upon the statute-books of the State.

The gentleman asks if there has been any appeal made to repeal these bills. I had the honor to make a speech last session, in which I warned them upon these very questions. At the conclusion of that speech, after citing and arguing against these very bills, I said:

"I think I have clearly established that the Republican party is the only party in the land traitorous to the Constitution, and consequently disloyal to the Union; that the founders of the Republic held no principles such as theirs; that the Democratic party is not aggressive but defensive upon the question of southern rights; that the Republican party alone is aggressive; that should this party succeed, that success would work the inevitable overthrow of the best Government ever given to man."

"I am for preserving this, the fairest fabric of human liberty. I am for upholding our institutions as they came from the hands of our fathers. I cherish them just as they gave them to us. Perish forever all the bright memories of the illustrious past, if they cannot be preserved unsullied! I yield to no mortal man in devotion to this Union. Tennessee, the proud State of my nativity, among the first-born daughters, loves this Union with deep devotion. But, sir, with this devotion there is mingled a sacred attachment to the Constitution. Her rights in the Confederacy, her equality, and the perfect equality of all her people, she will guard with a jealous care." * * * "I warn you, then, you men of the North—you who boast your Bunker Hill, and other battle-fields of the Revolution—I warn you to beware, to stop while yet it is time, and stay the hand that is laid upon the ark of our covenant."

Sir, they did not stay the hand; and the words then spoken have proven, alas, but too prophetic!

The next charge from which my colleague undertakes to defend the Republican party is, that the people of the free States intend to abolish slavery where it exists in the States. In vindication of this charge he says:

"No political party that ever assembled in convention in this country has given stronger guarantees against any desire or any power to interfere with slavery in the States of this Union. They did more than this—that which no other political party in this country has ever done. Apprehending the possibility of invasions similar to that of John Brown, they denounce in express terms all such raids 'as among the gravest of crimes.'"

What are some of these guarantees to which my colleague alluded? Are they the guarantees indicated by the preamble and resolutions of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BLAKE) at the last session? Let us see what they are:

"Whereas the chattelizing of mankind and the holding of persons as property are contrary to natural justice and the fundamental principles of our political system, and are notoriously a reproach to our country throughout the civilized world, and a serious hindrance to the progress of republican liberty among the nations of the earth: Therefore,

Resolved, That the Committee on the Judiciary be, and the same are hereby, instructed to inquire into the expediency of reporting a bill giving freedom to every human being, and interdicting slavery wherever Congress has the constitutional power to legislate on the subject."

Pretty strong guarantees these to protect slavery in the States; sworn to by the very men who responded to my colleague! "No, no! we do not mean to disturb slavery in the States."

But, sir, I have still stronger evidence of the purposes of the Republican party to protect slavery in the States, in the District of Columbia, &c. While my colleague from the first district (Mr. NELSON) was addressing the House the other day, he was interrupted by the gentleman from Maine, (Mr. MORSE,) who said that—

"Mr. NELSON had read a paragraph from the message of the Governor of Tennessee, in which it was charged that the Republican party intend to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and the slave trade between the States; but that never, since the organization of the Republican party, has any man, north or south, ever heard a Republican take any such ground. It was never seen in any Republican platform or speech, and the Republican party do not want to do any such thing."

Now, sir, I read from a speech made by Hon. Mr. Chase on the 11th of June, 1845. I believe that Mr. Chase is a member of the Republican party. I believe he is a prospective member of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet. It is so understood, at any rate. I ask this House to listen to what Mr. Chase said in this connection. On that occasion he said:

"We are, therefore, resolutely, inflexibly, at all times, and under all circumstances, hostile to the longer continuance of slaveholding in our land. We believe that its removal can be effected peacefully, constitutionally, without real injury to any, with the greatest benefit to all. We propose to effect this by repealing all legislation and discontinuing all action in favor of slavery at home and abroad; by prohibiting the practice of slaveholding in all places of exclusive national jurisdiction, in the District of Columbia, in American vessels upon the seas, in forts, arsenals, navy yards; by forbidding the employment of slaves upon any public work; by adopting resolutions in Congress declaring that slaveholding in all the States created out of national Territories, is unconstitutional, and recommending to the others the immediate adoption of measures for its extinction within their respective limits; and by electing and appointing to public station, such men, and only such men, as openly avow our principles, and will honestly carry out our measures."

Another strong evidence that the Republican party will give "the strongest guarantees to protect slavery in the States." So you will see that the Governor of Tennessee was not so very far wrong when he made the declaration which was denied by the gentleman from Maine, and which denial was accepted by my colleague, (Mr. NELSON.) I am somewhat astonished that my colleague did not bring in the famous book, called the Helper book, signed by sixty members of this House of the Republican party, as another evidence of the determination of this party to protect slavery in the States, especially as that book gave such a complimentary notice of him in its pages. These are some of the evidences of the disposition of this party to protect slavery in the States, that have called to its defence the able and ingenious counsel for the defendants.

But, sir, my colleague goes on further to defend that party, because he says the charges made against them concerning the execution of the fugitive slave law are untrue; and he goes on to say, in their defence, that that law has been faithfully executed. How has it been faithfully executed? It is true, that in many instances the law has been carried out, but it has been at the point of the bayonet, and at more cost to the master than the slave was worth, and in spite of public sentiment at the North.

For the accommodation of the gentleman from Indiana, (Mr. KILOORE,) I will give the States he called for awhile ago. In the following States, officers and citizens are prohibited by heavy penalty from aiding in the execution of the fugitive slave law: Maine, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Michigan, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. But they say that Rhode Island has recently repealed her personal liberty bill.

Mr. JUNKIN. The gentleman from Tennessee must know that the decision made by the Supreme Court in the case of the Commonwealth against Prigg, induced the State of Pennsylvania, and many other States, to prohibit their officers from taking any active part in the rendition of fugitive slaves. That case decided that State officers had no right to engage in such rendition, and these personal liberty bills only carried out that decision—nothing more.

Mr. AVERY. But was not the object of passing these bills to prevent the execution of the fugitive slave law, which was passed in obedience to the Constitution?

Mr. JUNKIN. Why, sir, the decision I have alluded to was made before any fugitive law was passed. The Supreme Court expressly decided that the State officers had nothing to do with the rendition of fugitive slaves.

Mr. RIGGS. Will the gentleman from Tennessee allow me to correct him?

Mr. AVERY. I hope I will not be burdened with interruptions. There always has been a fugitive slave law. These statutes have been enacted for the purpose of nullifying both the old law, which was approved by Washington, as well as the law of 1850. I only instanced them in reply to my colleague's argument that the Republican party had done more in their platform to protect slavery in the States than any other party. I instanced them to show how this determination was manifested.

Mr. RIGGS. With the permission of the gentleman from Tennessee, I desire to correct him in respect to New Jersey having a personal liberty bill. There is no such statute which has ever passed the Legislature of the State.

Mr. AVERY. I was quoting from a report of the Virginia Legislature, made in reference to the Brown raid at Harper's Ferry, not having had time to hunt up the laws, in which New Jersey is included in the list. I had not heard it denied, and did not know that such laws do not exist in New Jersey.

Mr. RIGGS. They do not.

Mr. AVERY. Then of course I am pleased to modify my statement so far as New Jersey is concerned.

Now, sir, my colleague goes on to argue that the charge is false against the Republican party, that any member of that party seeks to establish the equality of the races—

Mr. KILGORE rose.

Mr. AVERY. I cannot yield further. My time is too rapidly passing away. My colleague (Mr. ETHERIDGE) next said that the charge against the Republican party in regard to the equality of the races was false. Let us see what Mr. Lincoln says upon this subject, the President elect of the Republican party, authorized to speak, I suppose, for them.

In a speech made by Mr. Lincoln, on the 6th of May, 1842, at Cincinnati, on the occasion of the presentation of a silver pitcher to Mr. Chase, by some free negroes, as a token of their regard, Mr. Lincoln was present and said:

"In what I have done I cannot claim to have acted from any peculiar consideration of the colored people as a separate and distinct class in the community, but from the simple conviction that all the individuals of that class are members of the community, and, in virtue of their manhood, entitled to every original right enjoyed by any other member. We feel, therefore, that all legal distinction between individuals of the same community, founded in any such circumstances as color, origin, and the like, are hostile to the genius of our institutions, and incompatible with the true history of American liberty. Slavery and oppression must cease, or American liberty must perish.

"In Massachusetts, and in most, if not all, the New England States, the colored man and the white are absolutely equal before the law.

"In New York the colored man is restricted as to the right of suffrage by a property qualification. In other respects the same equality prevails.

"I embrace, with pleasure, this opportunity of declaring my disapprobation of that clause of the Constitution which denies to a portion of the colored people the right of suffrage.

"True Democracy makes no inquiry about the color of the skin, or place of nativity, or any other similar circumstances of condition. I regard, therefore, the exclusion of the colored people as a body from the elective franchise as incompatible with true Democratic principles."

What says Mr. SEWARD, who is to be the head of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet? In a speech made in the United States Senate, January 30, 1850, he uses the following language:

"I am in favor of the equality of men—of all men, whether they be born in one land or born in another. I am in favor of receiving the whole. I acknowledge them all to constitute one great family, for whom it is the business of statesmen and the business of man to labor and to live."
 * * * "Senators will find that to the extent that humanity bears the semblance which is impressed upon us by the hand of our Maker, it is my design and my purpose to labor and to bring about that equality in the land in which I live, and, as far as may be, in all other lands. And, going upon this broad principle, I have no hesitation in saying, that there is no distinction in my respect or affection between men of one land and of another; between men of one clime and another; between men of one race and another; or between men of one color and another; no distinction but what is based, not upon institutions of government, not upon the consent of society, but upon their individual and personal merit."

These are the sentiments of the master spirits of the Republican party—their President, their first and their second Cabinet officer; and yet we are told no such sentiments belong to the party.

My colleague, in this connection, referred to the past history of Tennessee, and declared that, from 1796 to 1835, that State has sanctioned and deliberately approved the principle of negro equality; that Jackson had sanctioned and approved it.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that, in the formation of the constitution of the State of Tennessee, in 1796, in defining what should be the qualifications of voters, it confined this qualification to "all free male citizens over the age of twenty-one years;" but no man, I presume, then thought of negro equality or negro suffrage. The word "white" was left out in the formation of this constitution. Advantage, however, is taken of this omission to make the charge that negro equality once was the doctrine of the State. Sir, no man there ever thought of approving the infamous doctrine of negro equality. I repudiate and spurn it as the sentiment of that State now or ever. Does any man believe that Andrew Jackson was an advocate of negro equality? And such a charge, too, to come from a Representative from Tennessee. It is true, they found that defect in the constitution of 1796; but when, in 1835, an opportunity was afforded for amendment, the word "white" was instantly inserted: and from that time it has been provided that the qualification of voters shall be confined to all free white male citizens over the age of twenty-one.

My colleague went on to argue that every single, solitary foot of southern territory had been acquired by northern treasure and northern votes; that they had willingly—yea, willingly—yielded to the South every demand that had been made. What are the facts in regard to this question of the acquisition of territory and of the admission of slave States into the Union? Let the record speak. It shows that every foot of slave territory has been acquired with the aid of a few northern Democrats, who have stood by us ever in the hour of our peril, but against the great majority of northern votes. It shows that every slave State that has ever been admitted into the Union has been admitted against the great majority of northern votes, against the efforts of the Republican party now in power, who assume to take possession of purse and sword, and administer this Government. My colleague says that the South got the Missouri compromise, and they repealed it. How did they get the Missouri compromise? Why, sir, it was taken as a poor boon to the South to prevent the North from saying that Missouri should only be admitted with slavery forever excluded from her territory, against the will of that people, as expressed in their constitution; and when they refused faithfully even to carry out that, it was repealed. The record shows that after the Missouri compromise was adopted, the very next session, when she presented herself with a slave constitution at the door of Congress for admission, sixty-one northern Representatives in this House voted for the repeal of that compromise, and for a proviso declaring that no slave should exist within the limits of the State of Missouri.

And so it has been with regard to every slave State—Florida, Arkansas, and Texas. My colleague says that we are indebted to northern Representatives for the acquisition of all these Territories, and he refers particularly to the Territory of Louisiana. Does he not know that the greatest portion of that territory, slave territory as it all was when we acquired it, is to-day free, and in the hands of the Republicans?—this party planted upon the declaration, too, that not another foot of slave territory we shall ever have; upon the declaration that, in defiance of the Supreme Court, we cannot carry our property in this common territory; with a President who declared in a speech at Chicago, July 10, 1858:

"If I were in Congress, and a vote should come up on a question whether slavery should be prohibited in a new Territory, in spite of the Dred Scott decision, I would vote that it should."

Sir, I was asked just now to specify some of the charges against the Republican party. Allow me to make some slight specification by substituting a short extract from a most eloquent and powerful speech of a southern Senator the other day in

parting forever from that once angust body. In speaking of this fanatical spirit of the North, which is the very breath of this Republican party, he said:

"It denied us Christian communion, because it could not endure what it styles the moral leprosy of slaveholding; it refused us permission to sojourn, or even to pass through the North, with our property; it claimed freedom for the slave if brought by his master into a northern State; it violated the Constitution and treaties and laws of Congress, because designed to protect that property; it refused us any share of lands acquired mainly by our diplomacy and blood and treasure; it refused our property any shelter or security beneath the flag of the common Government; it robbed us of our property, and refused to restore it; it refused to deliver criminals against our laws, who fled to the North with our property or our blood upon their hands; it threatened us, by solemn legislative acts, with ignominious punishment if we pursued our property into a northern State; it murdered southern men when seeking the recovery of their property on northern soil; it invaded the borders of southern States, poisoned their wells, burnt their dwellings, and murdered their people; it denounced us by deliberate resolves of popular meetings, of party conventions, and of religious and even legislative assemblies, as habitual violators of the laws of God and the rights of humanity; it exerted all the moral and physical agencies that human ingenuity can devise or diabolical malice can employ to heap odium and infamy upon us, and to make us a by-word of hissing and of scorn throughout the civilized world."

The gentleman says, "with sword in one hand and torch in the other, he will go home and fight disunion." The question of Union or disunion is not now for Tennessee to settle. Six States, making a mighty empire, stretching from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, are already out of the Union; before another week to be followed by one more, with a domain almost as large as all the rest. The only question which will be left for Tennessee is, will she join these, her southern glorious sisters, or will she link her fortunes with the Republican North?

What does the gentleman mean by his torch and sword, and following the flag of his country wherever it floats? Does he mean, sir, if that flag floated over hostile armies marching into the borders of Tennessee to subjugate the people of that or a sister State, that he would be found fighting under it? Sir, if this be his meaning, let me point him to the following resolutions, passed almost unanimously by his own State:

"*Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee*, That this General Assembly has heard with profound regret of the resolutions recently adopted by the State of New York, tendering men and money to the President of the United States, to be used in coercing certain sovereign States of the South into obedience to the Federal Government.

"*Resolved*, That this General Assembly receives the action of the Legislature of New York as the indication of a purpose upon the part of the people of that State to further complicate existing difficulties, by forcing the people of the South to the extremity of submission or resistance; and so regarding it, the Governor of the State of Tennessee is hereby requested to inform the Executive of the State of New York, that it is the opinion of this General Assembly that whenever the authorities of that State shall send armed forces to the South for the purpose indicated in said resolutions, the people of Tennessee, uniting with their brethren of the South, will, as one man, resist such invasion of the soil of the South at all hazards, and to the last extremity."

This, sir, is the spontaneous and patriotic voice of the proud freemen of Tennessee. Let me tell the gentleman, too, that the author of these resolutions is his own constituent, and a member of his own party. Can it be possible that, should the flag of his country be prostituted to the base and despotic purpose of subjugating sovereign States, he would still be there? That under it he would lift a fratricidal hand with "torch and sword?" My first and highest allegiance is to my State; and I pledge now, that when this ensanguined war shall come, (which may God in His providence avert!) the brave men of Tennessee will rally to the standard of their State, and resist unto the death any invasion of the soil of the South, it matters not under whatsoever banner the invading foe may come.





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